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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AG](#) [NG](#) [ML](#) [MR](#)  
SUBJECT: AFRICOM COMMANDER MEETING WITH ALGERIAN  
PRESIDENTIAL COUNTERTERRORISM ADVISER

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. William Jordan. Reasons: 1.4 (b), (d)

Summary  
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11. (C) Algerian Presidential Counselor for Terrorism Kamel Rezag Bara told AFRICOM Commander General Ward November 26 that Algeria was leading a regional effort with Mali, Mauritania, and Niger against AQIM but that heads of state had yet to set the date for a summit meeting of these countries in Bamako. He repeated a familiar Algerian assertion that some Malian leaders were not committed to fighting terrorist kidnappings for ransom. South American drugs entering Africa and filtering into Algeria were another growing problem linked to terrorism. Beyond the immediate region, Algeria worked closely with the African Union on security challenges such as Somalia. Algeria had established interagency "contact group" security discussions with Germany, Russia and the Netherlands and, as noted during DASD Huddleston's visit in mid-October, wanted to do so with the U.S. General Ward stressed the U.S. priority of partnering with African countries to build their capability to meet common security threats. End summary

Algeria's Fundamental Priorities  
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12. (C) Visiting AFRICOM Commander General William E. Ward on November 26 met for one hour with Algerian Presidential Counselor on Terrorism Kamel Rezag-Bara in a meeting room at the government reception house "el-Mithaq" in Algiers. Rezag-Bara was accompanied by General Nourredine Mekri, Director of the Directorate of External Relations and Cooperation (DREC), and Major General Abdelhamid Ghriss, Chief of the Organization and Logistic Department of the National Popular Army (ANP). Participating in the meeting with General Ward were the Ambassador, General Ward's foreign policy advisor Dr. Raymond Brown, DAO head Col. Terry Tichenor, Embassy OSC head Major Dan Phillips, and Pol-Econ Chief Bosshart (notetaker). Rezag-Bara opened the meeting by stating that Algeria and the U.S. should continue these high-level meetings to find a common language and identify common threats. The General said we should be able to see things from the viewpoint of the other side. Rezag-Bara said that Algeria's policy was based on protecting its sovereignty, independence, identity, and place in the region. He conceded that after achieving its independence, Algeria had made mistakes, the consequences of which emerged in the 1980s. The terrorism of the 1990s rooted in Islamic ideology had threatened this independence, sovereignty, and identity. Algeria had fought that terrorism to the point that it was no longer a threat to national security, but it remained a

national "problem." Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) continued to be a matter of concern. Algeria had fought terrorism just as much on the political-ideological level as militarily, with the message that Islam is for everyone.

#### Algerian Efforts Against the AQIM Threat

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¶3. (C) Rezag-Bara went on to say that AQIM remained a concern, and had spread to Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Algeria was committed to not permit AQIM to establish itself in or near the borders of Algeria. Algeria therefore was leading a partnership with these three and with Libya to combat AQIM, and looked forward to a summit with these countries in Bamako before the end of the year, although the exact time had yet to be determined. Noting that Mali would be the next stop on his itinerary, General Ward said that we supported this regional effort and would urge Malian President Toure to help make the summit happen.

¶4. (C) Rezag-Bara stated that internal political problems had arisen in Mauritania and Niger in recent months, but the situation had calmed. There was a bigger problem with Mali: some of that country's leaders were not committed to the fight against the kidnapping of foreigners for ransom. For this reason, Algeria supported a UN Security Council resolution condemning the payment of ransom, as a measure to combat terrorist financing. General Ward asked whether Algeria would take over hosting the meeting if Mali were unable to do so, to which Rezag-Bara replied that the venue of Bamako was already agreed, but that heads of state still had to agree on a date.

#### Drugs

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¶5. (C) The Presidential Counselor explained that Mali, Mauritania, and Niger were the "first periphery" of countries Algeria had security concerns about. However, drugs from Latin America entering Africa through the Gulf of Guinea and then passing through the "first periphery" into Algeria forced Algeria to consider a "second ring" of countries of concern, primarily Chad, Nigeria, and other Muslim countries.

#### Forming a "Contact Group"

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¶6. (C) General Ward seconded Rezag-Bara's idea that the threats we faced were transnational and did not recognize borders. He recalled that Rezag-Bara had proposed to DASD Huddleston in Algiers the previous month setting up a bilateral interagency "contact group" to discuss security issues. Terrorist groups and drugs in the Sahel and beyond could be on the agenda of such a group's discussion and help us reach a common understanding.

¶7. (C) Rezag-Bara noted that Algeria had such "contact groups" with many countries interested in the al-Qa'ida threat, including Germany, Russia, and the Netherlands, and he noted that Algeria is ready for further cooperation in this vein with the U.S. The meeting with the Netherlands last month had seen a productive discussion of "deradicalization" of terrorists who surrendered and how to help them deradicalize others. In mid-December, Algeria would have discussions with the EU Troika to discuss security in the Sahel and deradicalization of Maghreb-origin people living in Europe.

#### General Ward: Partnership against Common Threats

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¶8. (C) General Ward praised these initiatives as examples of working in partnership against threats that no single nation could combat alone. He expressed a concern whether there was a will in the concerned countries to use the capacity we were working to give them. Mauritania had the will. Niger did as well in spite of the government's need to confront domestic

political challenges. Mali needed encouragement, which the General promised he would provide in person during the next stop on his itinerary. He also agreed that we had to look beyond the countries on Algeria's southern belt. The General said the U.S. recognized Algeria's leading role in this regional effort.

¶19. (C) Rezag-Bara pointed out the security role of the African Union in conflicts farther away, such as in Somalia. It was important for Africa that the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) be successful. Rezag-Bara noted that the next head of AMISOM would be Ambassador Boubacar Diarra, from Mali, currently Director of the African Center for the Study and Research of Terrorism (CAERT) in Algiers.

#### Programs, Not Bases

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¶10. (C) Rezag-Bara mentioned that many Africans still believed the U.S. was determined to set up military bases in Africa. While he knew this was not the case, it was important for the U.S. and AFRICOM to show that its objective was to implement programs to help countries counter threats, not to build U.S. bases. General Ward echoed that this was precisely his message during a press conference at the U.S. Embassy the previous day. He praised Algeria's work in AMISOM and the AU, a body with which the U.S. is also engaged. The U.S. did not want to lead these countries and organizations but to support their efforts. Deradicalization was an issue for the U.S. as we undertook to close Guantanamo. He thanked Algeria for its cooperation on taking back Guantanamo detainees from Algeria.

¶11. (C) Rezag-Bara closed by saying that the objectives in President Obama's Accra and Cairo speeches were the pillars of U.S. engagement with the Muslim world.

JORDAN